independence. A prominent member of the CPI(M) party Shri Ghosh worked for the welfare of the poor masses with great devotion and dedication.

We deeply mourn the passing away of President Samora Machel of Mozambique, Shri Maganlal Bhagwanji Joshi, Shri T. Anjaiah, Dr. Salig Ram and Shri Shantimoy Ghosh.

I request Members to rise in their places and observe two minutes' silence as a mark of respect to the memory of the departed.

[Hon. Members then stood in silence for two minutes]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Secretary-General will convey to the members of the bereaved families our deep sense of sorrow and profound sympathy.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Condition of workers engaged in stone crushing in Paqurh (Bihar)

*1. SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR:†

SHRI KAILASH PATI MISHRA:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news report which appeared in the Times of India of the 14th September, 1986 to the effect that about 20,000 workers engaged in stone crushing in Pakurh, Bihar face certain death due to silicosis which they contract from the dust generated in the process;

(b) whether it is a fact that a large number out of them are women and children who earn scanty wages and get no relief in any form; and

(c) if so, what remedial measures are being taken or are proposed to be taken by Government in the matter?

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Ashwani Kumar.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) Yes.

(b) and (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

In Pakurh area, there are over 150 working open-cast stone mines. Several stone-crushers are installed in the area, many of which come within the purview of the Mines Act, 1952, being located in or adjacent to and belonging to the mine.

The number of workers is not known. Under Section 25(1) of the Mines Act, Silicosis and Pneumoconicsis have been gazetted as notifiable occupational diseases and the owner, agent or manager of any mine where any work person contacts any notified disease is required to send notice thereof to the Chief Inspector of Mines. No such notice has been received by the Director General of Mines Safety in respect of any person employed in the Pakurh area. Further, under Secton 25(2) of the Mines Act, 1952, if any Medical practitioner attending on any mine worker detects that such a person is suffering from any notifiable disease, he is required to report the same to the Chief Inspector of Mines in writing. No such report has been received by the DG, Mines Safety.

The Central Govt. has fixed minimum rates of wages in respect of scheduled employment of stone breaking and stone crushing and scheduled employment in stone-mines. These minimum wages are as per the attachee annexure.

During 1985, 14 stone mines in Pakurh area were inspected by the Officers of the DG, Mines Safety. During the current year, so far, 67 mines have been inspected. In some mines, dust respirators were provided, while in some others these were not provided. This has been brought to the notice of the mines management. Presently, initial and periodical medical examination of persons employed in open-cast mines is not mandatory. The proposal to issue a notification under the Mines Rules, 1955, for such initial/periodical examination to cover all persons engaged in crushing of minerals is under the consideration of Government.

Annexure

Minimum wages in Stone Breaking/Stone Crushing/Stone Mines
Stone Breaking/stone Crushing

Category of Workers	D (in Rs.)
1. Unskilled	8·50
2. Semi-Skilled/unskilled Supervisory	10·75
3. Skilled	13·50

Stone Mines

Category of Workers	Rate of wages per day (in Rs.)	
	For work above ground	For work below ground
1. Unskilled	11·00	13·25
2. Semi-skilled-Unskilled Supervisory	13·75	16·50

श्री अश्विनी कुमार : माननीय सभापति महोदय, मैंने प्रश्न के अंदर समाचार पत्र का ब्यौरा देते हुए बिहार की पाकुरा माइन्स में पत्थर तोड़ने वाली खदानों के अंदर जो काम करने वाले हैं उनके बारे में उन को कितना वेजेज मिलता है और उन के लिये दवा की क्या व्यवस्था है, इस के बारे में प्रश्न पूछा है। माननीय मंत्री जी ने अपने उत्तर में लिखा है कि अनस्किल्ड को साढ़े आठ रुपया और जो सेमी स्किल्ड और अनस्किल्ड सुपरवाइजरी स्टाफ में हैं उन को साढ़े 16 रुपया मिलता है। अखबार में जो खबर छपी है उसमें लिखा है कि उन को 4 रुपये से लेकर 7 रुपये तक मिलता है। मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से सबसे पहले यह जानना चाहूंगा कि यह जो दोनों खबरों के अंदर अंतर है और जो नियम आप ने बनाये हैं मिनिमम वजज के, वह वहां लागू हो रहे हैं या नहीं और इस के लिये कौन-सी मशीनरी केन्द्रीय सरकार की है और कौन-सी मशीनरी प्रान्तीय सरकार की है। साधारणतः उत्तर मिलता है कि यह प्रान्तीय सरकार की जिम्मेदारी है, केन्द्र की कोई जिम्मेदारी नहीं है। इसलिये मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से निवेदन करना चाहूंगा कि आप की कौन-कौन सी जिम्मेदारी है और आप ने उस के लिये अब तक क्या किया है कृपया इस से अवगत करायें ?

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: Sir, in this it is not the responsibility of the State Government. It is our responsibility and the appropriate Government is the Central Government and I will not shirk my responsibility in this matter. But I only want to submit to the House that I have not got the full facts with me because, during the last few days, because of Diwali and also, to a certain extent, because of the strike in the Telecommunications Department, we have not been able to get the full facts. That was why I was interested to know from he honourable Member whether he had any personal knowledge

for what is happening there or whether he is basing his question on the newspaper reports only. If the honourable Member has got any personal knowledge, perhaps that would help me in answering this question better. But, as far as the minimum wages are concerned, Sir, so far we have had no reports, except this newspaper report, that the minimum wages are not being paid. But I am sending a team of officers to go there after this question has been put; I will be very frank about it. Somehow this news item skipped my notice and, therefore, I am grateful to the honourable Member for having put this question. I am sending a team of officers to enquire into this and get me the full facts about this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You put your second supplementary now.

श्री अश्विनी कुमार: सभापति महोदय, पाकुड़ की माइंस की मुझे व्यक्तिगत जानकारी भी है और मैं इतना ही कह सकता हूं कि वहां अधिकांशत: मिनिमम वेजेज दिये जा रहे हैं। कुछ जगहें हैं जहां इस का उल्लंघन हो रहा है और उन के बारे में माननीय मंत्री जी को ध्यान देना चाहिए। जिस बात का अधिकतर उल्लंघन हो रहा है वह यह कि उन की दवा दारू की कोई व्यवस्था नहीं ही रही है। जो सिलकोसिस है वह टी बी से भी भयंकर बीमारी है। उस के उपचार की कोई व्यवस्था न सरकार की तरफ से हो रही है और न माइन ओनर्स की तरफ से हो रही है। अधिक से अधिक जो अच्छे माइन ओनर्स हैं उन्होंने एक-एक डाक्टर रख दिया है। उन को वे जो कर दवा के लिये कह सकते हैं और कभी-कभी उसका पैसा माइन ओनर्स देते हैं और कभी मजदूर उस का पैसा देता है। परन्तु यह इतना महंगा इलाज है कि मजदूर तो नहीं करा सकते और माइंस आनर्स भी कराने से कतराते हैं। मैं आपसे जानना चाहूंगा कि जैसा कि समाचार में दिया है कि मध्य प्रदेश के मनसोर में इस पत्थर की धूल के कारण आज कोई बूढ़ा आदमी दीखता नहीं है, सब की मृत्यु हो जाती है। तो मैं जानना चाहता हूं कि जैसी स्थिति मनसोर की हो गयी है उसी प्रकार से बिहार के जो माइंस एरिया हैं वहां की स्थिति न हो उसके दवादारू की दृष्टि से, अस्पताल खोलने की दृष्टि से, उपचार करने की दृष्टि से सरकार क्या-क्या व्यवस्था करेगी यह बताने की कृपा करें?

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: Sir, I have stated in my main answer that as far as medical examinations of the workers are concerned, under the Act and under the Rules it is not mandatory. I have also said that we are contemplating to make it mandatory. We are going to issue a Notification. But one thing I want to bring to the notice of the House that in other fields wherever we have tried to establish diseases linked with their occupation we have found that many of our workers are not willing to subject themselves to the examination, because they are afraid of losing their jobs. They fear that if the disease is found out, then they will be dismissed from service and they would lose their livelihood. I have personal experience about other fields. This is the difficulty we are facing. But then a lot of education is also to be given to the workers and it needs to be explained to them properly, otherwise it will not be successfull.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Kailashpati Mishra. Not here. Prof. Lakshmanna.

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, before I put my question, I would like to bring to your kind notice that the new team of Ministers which has come has not been introduced to the House.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let it come in time. Please put your question. (*Interruptions*)

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Sir, the Minister has stated in his reply that 67 mines were ispected during the current year and 14 mines in 1985 were inspected by the D.G. Mines Safety. He has also stated that in Pakurh area there are over 150 working open-cast stone mines. I would like to know in how many of these 67+14 mines, that is, 81 mines, these incidents took place. And what steps were taken in this regard. I would like to know this from the Minister.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: Sir I said in the beginning that I was not able to get the full facts about it. I wanted to know how many had been prosecuted, what type of prosecution was launched and what type of penalties have been imposed. But I failed to get the information. I will furnish it to the Member as soon as I get it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Chaturanan Mishra.

श्री चतुरानन मिश्र : सभापति जी, मेरा पर्सनल अनुभव है कि इन खानों के अन्दर काम करने वाले मर्दों को 6-7 रुपये, महिलाओं को पांच रुपये और बच्चों को 3 से 4 रुपये की तनख्वाह मिलती है इसलिए मंत्री महोदय ने जो कहा है कि टीम भेजी है उनका मैं स्वागत करता हूं लेकिन एक बात मेरी समझ में नहीं आती है कि आपने जो मिनिमम वेजेज फिक्स की है वह पावर्टी लाइन के लिए इन्कम है उसका लैस दैन 50 परसेंट है तो क्या हमारी मिनिमम वेज बिलो पावर्टी लाइन के लैस दैन 50 परसेंट होगा ? दूसरे मेरा यह सवाल है कि जैसा आपने कोल माइन्स के लिए, माइका माइंस के लिए वैलफेयर आर्गेनाइजेशन बनायी है वैसी ही आर्गेनाइजेशन इन डाउनट्रोडन के लिए बनाने में आपको क्या एतराज है ? तीसरी बात ये जानना चाहूंगा कि जो डस्ट रेसपिरेटर्स हैं जो एक लीगल बाइडिंग्ज हैं उसको आप एनफोर्स कराने में क्यों फेल होते हैं क्यों आपने अपने उत्तर में बताया है कि मैनेजमेंट का ध्यान इस ओर आकर्षित किया गया है तो यह कब से सरकार की पालिसी हुई है कि लॉ को वॉयलेट करके उसको इस तरह जनरल एमनेस्टी दी जाए। यह फाइनेंस डिपार्टमेंट तो देख रहा था लेकिन लेबर डिपार्टमेंट में भी शुरू हो गया है। तो इस बारे में क्या सरकार बतायेगी कि जो लोग अपराधी हैं उनका प्रोसीक्यूशन क्यों नहीं किया जाता ?

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: Sir, as far as the report on the Minimum Wages is concerned, I have already stated that so far we have received no complaint about the Minimum Wages. The hon. Member has talked about the medical side, violations of the laws and general amnesty. The fact is that in our labour laws, the requirements prescribed are such that sometimes they are inducing them to violate the laws. I have said it very openly. Under this Act also, the punishment is imprisonment up to three months or a fine which may extent up to Rs. 1000/. Very often the fine is Rs. 5/- or Rs. 50/- or Rs. 100/- only. The management finds it easier to violate the law and then pay a fine of Rs. 100/- than to adhere to the provisions of the law. This is what I find in most of the labour laws. We are bringing in amendments to the various labour laws which we will be discussing in this House also. We will be making an attempt to increase the quantum of punishment. The policy of the Government is to move towards that. We are going to make the punishment more stringent for the violation of various labour laws.

As regards Welfare Fund is concerned, there are some areas where we have the Welfare Funds for biri workers and mine workers of chrome, dolomite, mica and others. There is such a vast area of unorganised sector. So, I do not think it will be possible for us to identify any area. What we are trying to do is to have a study of the whole unorganised sector. After we have made a study of the whole unorganised sector, we will certainly be formulating our ideas as to what should be done towards this unorganised sector.

SHRI VISHVJIT PRITHVIJIT SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the problem is that we wait for the disease to come up actually and then we look for a cure. Our effort ought to be to curb the incidence of the disease itself. In the reply of the hon. Minister, it has been brought to the notice of the management that dust respirators should be provided. "The proposal to issue a notification under the Mines Rules, 1955, for such initial/ periodical examination to cover all persons engaged in crushing of minerals is under the consideration of the Government." The hon. Minister has now given an assurance that this notification is going to be issued. If

the rules provide and I know that the rules do provide and when the Government has got ample powers to see to it that all kinds of safeguards can be introduced, I do not see any reason why notifications cannot be issued to cover the entire gamut of preventive measures and not just respirators. They should see that there is initial and periodical medical examination and they should see to it that unfit workers are hospitalised.

SHRI N. K. P. SALVE: Sir, the hon. Member has referred to the safeguards. The question reads that we enter into a contract for silicosis and not that we contact silicosis. It says *that we enter into a contract.*

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: I want to respectfully submit to this House that it is not power alone which can solve this problem. It is true that powers are available with the Government. But unless we have the manpower, it is very difficult for us to implement the laws. (*Interruptions*) The fact remains that we are not getting the doctors. We have created infrastructure by having dispensaries and hospitals under the social security system and we are having E.S.I. hospitals. But it is very difficult to get the people to work in those areas. This is one aspect which has to be kept in view. Though we have the power, it is very difficult without people to implement the laws.

U.S. AWACS for Pakistan

*2. SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAV RAO JADHAV:

SHRI RAM CHANDRA VIKAL:†

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the United States has agreed to lend the early warning planes, the AWACS, to Pakistan to undertake surveillance of its air space; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard and what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) and (b) Government have seen reports that the United States is considering provision of AWACS-type capability to Pakistan and is mounting surveillance patrols in Pakistani air space in the interim period.

Government has conveyed to the United States Government its serious concern about these developments whose security implications for India remain under constant review.

श्री राम चन्द्र विकल : सभापति जी, मैं मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूं कि इस खतरे की चिंता से जो अवगत कराया है वह कब कराया है और उसका कुछ प्रभाव हुआ है या नहीं हुआ है ?

श्री के. नटवर सिंह : मैं आपको अभी तारीख दे दूंगा । पिछले महीने की 28 तारीख को विदेश मंत्रालय के विदेश सचिव ने भारतवर्ष में अमेरिका के राजदूत को बुलाया था और हमने उनके सामने अपने विचार रखे और कहा कि अमेरिका पाकिस्तान को जो नये ऐक्वक्स देने का विचार कर रहा है उससे इस इलाके में, इस रीजन में तनाव बढ़ेगा और हमें इस बात से बड़ी चिंता है। हम चाहते हैं कि ऐसा कार्य होना नहीं चाहिए। हमने अपने राजदूत को, जो वाशिंगटन में हैं, उनको भी कह दिया है कि वे वाशिंगटन में अमेरिकन सरकार से इस बात की चर्चा करें और अगर हो सके तो ऊंचे से ऊंचे पद वाले वहां के जो आफिसर हैं, वहां के जो मंत्री हैं, उनसे इसके बारे में बातचीत करें।

श्री राम चन्द्र विकल : मैं जानना चाहता हूं कि इस खतरे का मुकाबला करने के लिये सरकार क्या कर रही है और क्या सरकार ऊंचे स्तर पर भी इस वार्ता को चलाने का विचार कर रही है ?

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Ram Chandra Vikal.